

## The role of perceived employability

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### The role of perceived employability, core self-evaluations, and job resources on health and turnover intentions

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Abstract

According to Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study investigated the explanatory role of perceived employability, over and above core self-evaluations (CSE) and job resources, in relation to different aspects of health (physical and mental) and turnover intentions. Based on data obtained from a sample of 274 Romanian blue-collar employees (59.5% men), hierarchical multiple regressions revealed that perceived employability adds a significant variance compared to variance due to CSE and job resources with respect to aspects of health and turnover. The results highlight the role of perceived employability in health - on an individual level, and in decisions to leave the organization - on an organizational level. The findings are of value because they inform organizations how to design human resources strategies in order to retain a healthy workforce.

Keywords: perceived employability, core self-evaluations, job resources, health, turnover intentions

In a work environment characterized by feelings of insecurity, perceived employability (PE) is a useful resource for active adaptability to labor market changes (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, & De Witte, 2011a). Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), people must invest resources to protect themselves against resource loss, recover from it and gain new resources. Individuals that have at least one major resource tend to accumulate other resources and, ultimately, resources tend to form resource caravans (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, highly resourceful individuals are healthier than those with fewer resources, they adapt more proactively to their jobs, and achieve their goals successfully (Hobfoll, 2002). Resources that can contribute to employees' activity can be both job-related and person-related (Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2012). Personal resources are self-evaluations that reflect a sense of resiliency and refer to the individuals' capability to successfully control and impact their environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). Thus, PE is a personal resource that might contribute to individual and organizational success (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Van Dam, 2004). Specifically, PE is defined as "the individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment" (Vanhercke, De Cuyper, Peeters, & De Witte, 2014, p. 594). PE is related to different forms of employees' well-being, from work engagement to life satisfaction (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte, & Alarco, 2008). At the same time, PE is a concern for employers, because PE is also positively related to turnover intentions, and this fact is known as a management paradox (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011b). This study contributes to the understanding of this paradoxical relationship between PE and turnover, especially for the Romanian blue-collars workers.

Various individual characteristics serve as protective or vulnerability factors in response to work stress (Györkös, Becker, Massoudi, de Bruin, & Rossier, 2012). Core self-evaluations (CSE) can be defined as "fundamental, bottom-line evaluations that people make

of themselves" (Judge, 2009, p. 58). CSE, as an integrative trait, are equally associated with well-being and health. Job resources refer to the physical, psychosocial, and organizational aspects of work that the employee uses to achieve work goals (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job resources, as contextual factors, also have a motivational potential and can improve individual well-being and reduce turnover intentions. In our study, well-being refers to physical and psychological health (as an individual level outcome), and turnover intentions refer to perceived job alternatives in the labor market (as an organizational level outcome). Each of these variables is often studied separately in relation to well-being and turnover intentions. Rarely have they been studied together. A literature search in PsycInfo, using these variables as keywords, found no studies integrating all variables. We close this gap in the literature by studying the relation between additive resources (like CSE, job resources, and PE) and well-being on the one side, and with turnover intentions on the other side. Likewise, the current study tests whether personal resources, such as PE, add to the prediction of organizational and individual outcomes, over and above the contribution of CSE and job resources

Our study contributes to the existing literature in three different ways. First, in order to enrich knowledge about the additional explanatory power of various kinds of resources, it is relevant to study whether well-being and turnover intentions emerge at least in part from highly prevalent resources such as personality traits, job resources, and personal resources. Accordingly, we examine the relationship between resources (personal and job-related) and individual outcomes (e.g., mental and physical health). Also, we evaluate the relationship between these resources and organizational outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions). Second, we test the additional value of PE in explaining these individual and organizational outcomes. Third, we test this relation on a special sample of Romanian blue-collar workers. Generally, most research related to this topic has been done on white collar workers or mixed samples,

with one exception, in the context of research related to PE (De Cuyper et al., 2011a). The fact that we now focus on blue-collar workers really adds to the picture and literature. This is a 'forgotten' occupational group, and testing the hypotheses on this group adds to the generalization of the findings regarding PE.

### **CSE, well-being, and turnover intentions**

In a changing work-life, employees need job resources and personal characteristics in order to adapt successfully (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). CSE is a higher-order concept and comprises self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and lack of neuroticism (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). CSE is considered a personality construct which influences performance and well-being (Ferris, Rosen, Johnson, Brown, Risavy, & Heller, 2011). More specifically, people with a high score on CSE show higher levels of job satisfaction ( $\rho = .36, k = 86, n = 28\ 058$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\rho = .54, k = 33, n = 7087$ ), better job performance ( $\rho = .19, k = 38, n = 9553$ ), and higher intrinsic work motivation ( $\rho = .33, k = 12, n = 2359$ ) than those with a lower score on CSE (see meta-analysis of Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, & Tan, 2012).

CSE is a positive self-concept and describes how individuals see themselves as capable and effective in a variety of situations (Judge et al., 1997). Thus, people with positive CSE believe that they are able to control their life (Judge, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2004). It has been shown that such positive self-evaluations predict desirable outcomes such as performance, job, and life satisfaction (for a review, Judge et al., 2004). Although CSE was studied intensively in the context of job satisfaction, it is not fully integrated into the occupational stress literature (Brunborg, 2008; Chang et al., 2012). This is one of the first studies to pay specific attention to the CSE construct in the domain of occupational well-being research.

Earlier research has revealed that CSE explains a statistically significant proportion of variance in both physical and psychological health (Tsaousis, Nikolaou, Serdaris, & Judge, 2007; Judge, Ilies, & Zhang, 2012). These results suggest that CSE is a personality related construct that can be used as an important factor in explaining health variance at the interpersonal and intrapersonal level (Tsaousis et al., 2007). Individuals with highly positive self-perceptions tend to use proactive coping strategies in stressful situations, and believe that they possess the necessary resources to succeed in specific situations (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005).

Some recent studies analyzed the relation between CSE and turnover intention, as an organizational variable. These studies suggest that CSE is negatively related to turnover intention (Rode, Judge, & Sun, 2012; Albrecht, Paulus, Dilchert, Deller, & Ones, 2013; Joo, Hahn, & Peterson, 2015). Individuals with low CSE (i.e. with a low level of self-efficacy, low self-esteem, external locus of control, and a high level of neuroticism) show higher intent to quit their jobs and their organizations. Consequently, we formulate:

*Hypothesis 1.* CSE relates positively to mental health (H1a), positively to physical health (H1b), and negatively to turnover intentions (H1c).

### **Job resources, well-being, and turnover intentions**

A lot of stress models have been introduced in the occupational health area over the last 30 years. Among them, the job demands–control–support model (JDCS; Karasek & Theorell, 1990) is one of the most used and tested models (Kain & Jex, 2010). Starting with Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, job control plays a critical role in explaining job satisfaction of employees. In the JDCS model, the key job characteristics that predict positive and negative outcomes are demands, control, and support. More specifically, the combination of high demands with low control creates strain and reduces physical and

psychological well-being. Social support (from colleagues and supervisors), added later as the third dimension of the model, alongside job control and demands, is important for reducing stress (Johnson & Hall, 1988). A recent meta-analysis by Luchman and Gonzalez-Morales (2013) indicated that "job control and both sources of social support should be treated independently, as opposed to indicators of a shared latent factor, regarding their prediction of well-being" (p. 37). Supervisor and colleague support can be distinguished both conceptually and empirically (Luchman & Gonzales-Morales, 2013). The relationship between supervisor and colleague support is moderate ( $r = .36$ , in the meta-analysis of Ng and Sorensen, 2008, and  $r = .43$ , in the meta-analysis of Luchman & Gonzales-Morales, 2013). Thus, supervisor and colleague support act as independent resources when predicting well-being. Furthermore, each of the sources of social support and control has a significant contribution for providing and conserving personal resources. In addition, increasing job resources has traditionally been used as a way of increasing employees' adaptability at work in order to improve their health and organizational outcomes (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

Based on these arguments, we will focus on the analysis of separate job resources, and analyze job control, supervisor and co-worker support as job-related resources. Job control, defined as potential control conducted during the work day, is usually operationalized as autonomy and decision authority (Karasek, 1979). Thus, employees who have autonomy in their work are employees who can make a decision about tasks and directly affect the structure of these tasks (Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013). Since control helps employees deal with workplace demands, job control is considered to be a job resource (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Social support is a source of helpful social interaction with coworkers and supervisors (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Through a positive social relationship, an employee can access

supervisory assistance or advice, and thus supervisors' support can minimize work-related strain (Hobfoll, 2001). However, employees interact more frequently with coworkers than with supervisors, and this could also help them solve work related problems. Thus, the support of coworkers may be perceived as a source of positive affect. Accordingly, supervisor and coworkers support, as well as job control, have been hypothesized to be job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

A long series of studies have demonstrated the association between job characteristics and physical and mental health (de Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2003; Magee, Stefanic, Caputi, & Iverson, 2012). The relationship between social support, as a job resource, and health or well-being is well-established (see Halbesleben, 2006; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Additionally, job control was most highly related to employees' health (Schreurs, van Emmerik, Notelaers, & De Witte, 2010). Thus, social support and job control may help an employee to achieve his or her goals successfully, and may also increase their health (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

In contrast, studies that directly link job resources to turnover intentions are considerably scarce (for exceptions, see Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Kim & Stoner, 2008; De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen, & Mäkikangas, 2011c). Researchers identified a negative relationship between job control and social support from colleagues, on the one side, and turnover intentions, on the other (Kim & Stoner, 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2011c). As job resources are relatively easier to modify, reduced turnover intentions caused by poor resources at work are possibly easier to remedy (De Cuyper, et al., 2011c). Consequently, we formulate:

*Hypothesis 2.* Job resources relate positively to mental health (H2a), positively to physical health (H2b), and negatively to turnover intentions (H2c).



### **Perceived employability, well-being and turnover intentions**

In the context of a changing work life, personal resources play a key role in adapting to the work environment and in predicting individual and organizational outcomes. However, Hobfoll (2001), in his Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, explains that people with high personal resources are less vulnerable to resource loss because they are more capable of resource gain. In this situation, personal resources play a protective role for the mental and physical health of employees.

Recently, PE was studied as a personal resource in the context of employee well-being (Bernhard-Oettel, De Cuyper, Berntson, & Isaksson, 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2011a). However, studies on the relationship between PE and both favorable and unfavorable outcomes are scarce. For instance, PE has rarely been investigated in relation to life satisfaction, performance, well-being, and turnover intentions (De Cuyper et al., 2011a). Berntson and Marklund (2007), in a two-wave study among Swedish employees, found PE to be associated with general health ( $r=.10$ ,  $p<.05$ ,  $n=1918$ ) and mental well-being ( $r=.23$ ,  $p<.05$ ) when baseline health was controlled. In a recent longitudinal study, the positive effect of PE on well-being among the employed was confirmed (Vanhercke, Kirves, De Cuyper, Verbruggen, Forrier, & De Witte, 2015). PE is associated with health when employees perceive themselves as mobile inside or outside the organization (van der Vaart, Linde, de Beer, & Cockeran, 2014). However, the evidence of a relationship between PE and health is scarce, due to the lack of empirical work in this field. Also, more research is needed regarding behavioral consequences.

Recently, researchers have found a positive relationship between PE and turnover intentions (De Cuyper, Mauno et al., 2011c ( $r =.15$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $n = 308$ ); De Cuyper, Van der Heijden et al., 2011a ( $r =.12$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $n = 463$ ); van der Vaart et al., 2014 ( $r =.23$ ,  $p<.05$ ;  $n = 246$ ). Having a clear view on their employability helps employees to increase their chance to

find a new job on the labor market. Nonetheless, it could also generate damage for organizations, which might lose their best employees. Thus, this positive relationship is an advantage for workers and a disadvantage for the organization. This relation is generating a lot of debate in the human resources community, and this is summarized with the label of the management paradox (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011b). This paradoxical relationship tends to be boosted when employees may be inclined to leave the job if they believe they can quit without substantial losses (De Cuyper et al., 2011c). Also, if the labor market offers more opportunities, this could increase employees' intention to leave the organization (van der Vaart et al., 2014). Therefore, the relationship between PE and turnover intentions requires more empirical evidence. Also, we expect that PE will add to the explanation of individual and organizational outcomes, after controlling for CSE and job resources, because PE is caused by the combination of personal capacities, capacities offered by the organization, and external opportunities. The aim of this study is to evaluate the added value that PE has over CSE and job resources in explaining health and turnover intentions as work outcomes. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3.* Perceived employability relates positively to mental health (H3a), positively to physical health (H3b), and positively to turnover intentions (H3c), after controlling for the effect of CSE and job resources.

## **Method**

### **Participants and procedure**

The sample consisted of blue-collar employees working at a Romanian location of a multinational company and was collected based on a non-probabilistic convenience sampling procedure. The employees voluntarily participated in the study and were asked to fill in paper

and pencil self-report questionnaires. The first page of the questionnaire explained that the purpose of the study was to analyze individual work-related experiences. Anonymity was guaranteed. Respondents were also informed about how long it takes to complete the entire questionnaire (approximately 30 minutes). We distributed 400 questionnaires. Two hundred and seventy four respondents returned the questionnaire (71% response rate). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 61 years ( $M = 36.04$ ,  $SD = 10$ ) and 59.5% of them were men. Participants in the study had an average tenure of 7.15 years. Only twenty six respondents (9.8%) had a higher educational background (i.e. education beyond high school level).

### **Measures**

We used the Romanian versions of all instruments, which were evaluated using the standard back-translation technique (Breslin, 1970).

*Job resources* were measured with three scales, with 5 items each: job control ("Are you allowed to decide by yourself how to perform your work?"), supervisor support ("If necessary, can you ask your superior for help?"), and support from colleagues ("Can you count on your colleagues when you encounter difficulties in your work?") from the Questionnaire on the Experience and Evaluation of Work (VBBA; Van Veldhoven & Meijman, 1994). Response alternatives were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= *never* to 5 = *always*).

*Core self-evaluations*, a higher order construct represented by self-esteem, neuroticism, locus of control, and general self-efficacy, was measured using a 12-item scale (CSES; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). A sample item was "When I try, I generally succeed." Half of the items were recoded, and a high score on the scale represented high core self-evaluations. Each item was evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Perceived employability* was measured with four items from De Witte (1992), as used in the Psycones-study (Guest, Isaksson, & De Witte, 2010). All items are: "I will easily find another job if I lose this job.", "I could easily switch to another employer, if I wanted to", "I am confident that I could quickly get a similar job", "I am optimistic that I would find another job, if I looked for one". Each item was evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Physical health* was assessed by four items developed by Ware (1999), as part of the SF-36 Health Survey. All items are: "I seem to get sick more easily than others", "I'm as healthy as other people I know", "I expect that my health will get worse in near future" and "My health is excellent". Each item was assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Originally, items 2 and 4 were reverse scored and a high score signified poor physical health. We recoded items 1 and 3 to have a positive measure of physical health. Previous studies have provided evidence of the psychometric characteristics of this scale (Ware, 2000; Guest & Clinton, 2006).

*Mental health* was assessed with the scale of Berwick, Murphy, Goldman, Ware, Barsky, and Weinstein (1991) comprising five items (e.g., "During the past month, how much of the time have you felt calm and peaceful?"). All items are scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1= *never* to 6 = *always*). Originally, items 2 and 4 were reverse scored and a high score signified poor mental health. We recoded items 1, 3, and 5 to have a positive measure of mental health. This mental health scale is widely used in surveys of general health and has similar psychometric properties to those of the GHQ-12, but it is shorter (Hoeymans, Garssen, Westert, & Verhaak, 2004). Both health related scales (mental and physical) were successfully used in previous studies on the Romanian population, proving good psychometric properties (e.g., Virga & Iliescu, 2017).

*Turnover intention* was measured with a three-item scale developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979). The items referred to thoughts of quitting, searching for another job, and actually intending to quit (e.g. "I intend to change my current job next year"). The items were scored on a 5-point scale (1= totally agree, 5 = totally disagree).

### **Data analyses**

Hypotheses were tested using three hierarchical regression analyses with mental health, physical health, and turnover intentions as dependent variables. In total, three separate regression analyses were performed in SPSS 19.0. In all cases, CSE was included in the first step; job resources in the second one; finally, PE in the third one.

PE, as a newly proposed construct, is included in the third step of the regression to investigate the explanatory role of this personal resource, over and above core self-evaluations (CSE) and job resources, in relation to different health aspects (physical and mental) and turnover intentions.

### **Results**

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates of the variables in the model. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are larger than .70, ranging from .72 to .90. As expected, the correlations show a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The first proposed hypothesis received statistical support; CSE correlated positively and significantly with mental health ( $r = .44, p < .001$ ) and with physical health ( $r = .39, p < .001$ ), and negatively with turnover intentions ( $r = -.26, p < .001$ ). These results support Hypothesis 1, which stated that CSE is positively related to mental health (H1a), positively to physical health (H1b), and negatively to turnover intentions (H1c).

Also, the second proposed hypothesis received statistical support for each job resource that was studied. Thus, job control correlated positively and significantly with mental health ( $r = .15, p < .01$ ) and with physical health ( $r = .10, p < .05$ ), and negatively with turnover intentions ( $r = -.11, p < .05$ ). Colleague support correlated positively with mental health ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ) and with physical health ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ), and negatively with turnover intentions ( $r = -.29, p < .01$ ). Also, supervisor support correlated positively with mental health ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ) and with physical health ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ), and negatively with turnover intentions ( $r = -.29, p < .01$ ). These results support Hypothesis 2, which stated that job resources are positively related to mental health (H2a), positively to physical health (H2b), and negatively to turnover intentions (H2c).

Perceived employability correlated positively with mental health ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ), with physical health ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ), and with turnover intentions ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Table 2 shows the results of the hierarchical regressions with the three dependent variables. Regarding mental health as the criterion measure, in the first step CSE accounted for 19% of the variance ( $R = .44$ ) in mental health and the model was significant ( $F(1, 255) = 63.53, p < .001$ ). When job resources were added in the second step, the model was also significant ( $R = .48; F(3, 252) = 3.56, p < .01$ ); specifically, colleague support added significant variance ( $\beta = .12, p < .05$ ). In the third step, PE was related to mental health ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) and explained 1% of additional variance ( $R = .49; F(1, 251) = 4.36, p < .05$ ).

For the analysis of physical health, CSE at Step 1 accounted for 15% of the variance and the model was significant ( $R = .39; \beta = .39, p < .001; F(1, 257) = 46.93, p < .001$ ). In Step 2, the job resources did not significantly add to the explained variance ( $F(3, 254) = 1.79, ns$ ). In step three, PE was not associated to physical health ( $\beta = .07, ns, F(1, 253) = 1.82, ns$ ).

The regression analysis with turnover intention as the criterion measure revealed that in Step 1, for CSE, the model was significant ( $R = .26$ ;  $F(1, 258) = 19.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In Step 2, job resources, specifically supervisor support, accounted for an additional 6% of the variance ( $R = .36$ ;  $F(3, 255) = 5.98$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In step three, PE was positively related to turnover intention ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and added 4% to the explained variance ( $R = .41$ ).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

The results of the third steps of all regression analyses partially supported Hypothesis 3, which stated that PE was positively related to mental health (H3a), was not related to physical health (H3b), and positively related to turnover intentions (H3c), after controlling for the effect of CSE and job resources.

## **Discussion**

This paper studied PE in relationship to health and turnover. The aim of this study was to determine whether PE adds value over CSE and job resources in explaining health and turnover intentions as work outcomes, among blue-collar employees. The current study is one of the first to investigate CSE construct in the domain of work-related well-being and organizational outcomes. Also, we used a special sample consisting of blue-collar workers from Romania, and this type of sample was less studied in other research on this topic. This type of sample and country are assets of the study, as they allow for testing the generalizability of the theoretical ideas in contexts or samples that received little research attention in the past. Specifically, we focused on the added value of PE in explaining these outcomes, over and above CSE and job resources, based on COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) and JDCS model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). This study revealed that PE, as a personal resource, has an important role after controlling for personality traits like CSE, and job resources, in

the explanation of physical and mental health, on the one side, and turnover intentions, on the other side. Thus, PE acts as a protective resource for employee's mental health. Moreover, this study offers new evidence for the employability paradox on blue-collar workers.

The results of the study confirmed the first hypothesis, as CSE was positively related to health (mental and physical) and negatively related to turnover intentions. This is in accordance with other studies using personality traits as predictor variables for health (Tsaousis et al., 2007; Judge et al., 2012). This study adds new evidence for the relation between CSE and turnover intentions, in line with recent research (Rode et al., 2012; Albrecht et al., 2013; Joo et al., 2015).

The results of this study confirmed the second hypothesis. Supervisor support, as a job resource, is positively related to mental and physical health and negatively related to turnover intention. This further emphasizes the importance of supervisor support as a correlate of well-being and turnover intention. Also, job control and colleague support are positively related to health (mental and physical) and negatively related to turnover. Despite these relations, job resources were not identified as predictors of physical health in our study. However, colleague support was a predictor of mental health and supervisor support was a predictor of turnover intentions. This is relatively similar to results of other research, which identified job control and support for colleagues as predictors of turnover, but on white collar samples (Kim & Stoner, 2008; De Cuyper et al., 2011c). In our research, all respondents had a routine work, such as assembly line workers. In this context, supervisors give them tasks and tend to control the work process (Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013). Thus, for this kind of workers, the supervisor support is perceived as an important job resource, which reduces their intention to leave the organization. Because their work is predominantly physical, the relation between job characteristics and mental health is weaker and/or not significant (van der Vaart et al., 2014). Only colleague support, as a job resource, did



contribute to the psychological well-being for these employees. On the assembly line, the work implies a lot of interaction between colleagues (Wergin, 2003) and this creates a coworker network in which coworkers help one another; this promotes psychological well-being (Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013). Also, in our research, the majority of participants in the sample have a low level of education and have jobs with a low level of autonomy or decision authority. However, in this work context, job control is not perceived as a job resource, and therefore no relation with health and turnover intention was identified.

The results of the study partially confirmed the third hypothesis. Thus, PE as a personal resource is positively related to mental health and turnover intention. Employees with a high level of PE describe themselves as mentally healthy. However, these employees also score higher on turnover intention. This study offers new proof for the managerial paradox, but for a special category of workers - blue-collar. For white-collar employees, this management paradox supposes that highly employable workers may be high performers, but there may also be unintended consequences taking the form of higher turnover. Contrary to what little other research has been conducted on employees with a low level of education which have a low level of PE, in our study the participants were not highly employable according to objective standards, but had a good subjective perception of their employability (Berntson, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006). In addition, PE is positively related to the intention to leave the organization. A possible explanation of this management paradox for blue-collar workers may be related to the labor market in Romania, especially in the West region, where companies offer more jobs than the workforce demands. In this context, the employees tend to follow similar job opportunities offered by other companies that pay better. Thus, the PE of blue-collar workers is based not only on their competence development inside the organization, but on opportunities outside the organization also, like the discrepancy between labor market needs and unemployment rates (Berntson et al., 2006).

Moreover, PE accounted for a small but statistically significant percentage of incremental variance in mental health, which shows that PE is relevant for psychological well-being. Also, PE was a significant predictor of turnover intention, thus underlining the role of PE in the decision to leave the organization. Thus, employees with high CSE, a lot of available job resources, and a high level of employability tend to be healthier and have stronger intentions to leave the company.

Practical implications are related to the choice of an intervention that is appropriate to reduce turnover intentions and improve blue-collar worker's health. Such interventions may involve combined methods of increasing personal resources, especially PE based on employees' competencies. Creating a career path inside the company, combined with methods to improve the support offered by supervisors and colleagues are also good methods for reducing turnover and improve health. If blue-collar workers know their professional path in the company, and benefit from supervisor support, they will have good health, and they will not look outside of the organization for the same jobs, but remunerated insignificantly better than their current jobs. The message for human resources practitioners in product organizations is simple and clear: it is important to invest in employability, to build a supportive work climate, and to create a competitive internal labor market, as an alternative to the external labor market. Such a strategy will keep a skilled workforce in the organization, especially when combined simultaneously with a HR policy that focuses on stimulating job-related resources to increase the well-being of the employees. Understanding the relation between perceived employability and turnover intentions may help organizations design human resource policies that allow them to retain a competent and healthy workforce.

Finally, perceived employability explained only a reduced amount of variance in the outcome variables: 1% in mental health and 4% in turnover intentions, respectively. While such percentages of explained variance are not uncommon in studies in the area of work and

organizational psychology, these results suggest that there may be other important factors that determine employees' perceptions of employability and health (De Cuyper et al., 2011a).

### **Limitations**

The first major limitation of the research is related to its cross-sectional nature. No causal relationships could be tested between health and turnover and its predictors. A longitudinal study could further strengthen our conclusions and would create additional evidence for the nature of the relationships between PE and health, and PE and turnover intentions.

A second limitation is related to the use of self-report measures, and the concern related to the subjective nature of data, on the one side. On the other side, the measured variables have a subjective nature and self-report measures are appropriate for PE or turnover intentions. While self-perceptions are highly important in understanding how individuals perceive their own career or their well-being, using only self-perception measures does hold the risk of common-method bias. Future studies should consider including data from other sources (e.g., supervisor, coworkers), as external validation, and more objective data, such as objective health indicators and objective indicators of employability.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the major finding and contribution of this study is related to PE and its special role in explaining the health and turnover intentions on Romanian blue-collar workers, over and above personality traits and job resources. These findings help managers to project and implement effective interventions in product organizations, in order to improve the workers' health perception and to diminish turnover intentions, in accordance with the labor market dynamic.



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Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients Between Variables (N= 274)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1.</i>	<i>2.</i>	<i>3.</i>	<i>4.</i>	<i>5.</i>	<i>6.</i>	<i>7.</i>	<i>8.</i>
1. Supervisor support	4.43	.66	(.76)							
2. Colleague support	4.24	.79	.55**	(.82)						
3. Job control	3.26	1.05	.32**	.28**	(.81)					
4. Core self-evaluations	3.79	.53	.13*	.19**	.20**	(.82)				
5. Perceived employability	3.19	.97	-.06	.00	.09	.16**	(.89)			
6. Mental health	4.71	.91	.22**	.23**	.15**	.44**	.13*	(.81)		
7. Physical health	4.06	.79	.19**	.19**	.10*	.39**	.13*	.41**	(.72)	
8. Turnover intentions	1.65	.83	-.29**	-.29**	-.11*	-.26**	.18**	-.33**	-.24**	(.90)

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , one single tailed. Internal consistency alphas are displayed in the diagonal. Male = 1, female = 2. Scale from 1 to 5 for supervisor support, colleague support, job control, core-self evaluations, perceived employability, physical health, and turnover intentions; from 1 to 6 for mental health.



Table 2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses (N=274)

Variables	Mental health		Physical health		Turnover intention	
	R/R <sup>2</sup> / ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R/R <sup>2</sup> / ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R/R <sup>2</sup> / ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
<i>Step 1</i>	.44/.19**		.39/.15**		.26/.07**	
CSE		.44**		.39**		-.26**
<i>Step 2</i>	.48/.23/.03*		.41/.17/01		.36/.13/.06**	
CSE		.40**		.37**		-.22**
Job control		.00		-.02		.02
Supervisor support		.08		.14*		-.24**
Colleague support		.12*		-.01		-.01
<i>Step 3</i>	.49/.24/.01*		.42/.17/.006		.41/.17/.04**	
CSE		.38**		.36**		-.25**
Job control		-.00		-.03		.00
Supervisor support		.09		.15*		-.22**
Colleague support		.13*		-.01		-.01
PE		.11*		.07		.20**

Notes: \* p &lt; .01, \*\* p &lt; .001